

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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----- 064231

O R 050905Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6695

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 1793

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECTION THROUGHOUT TEXT)

FOR S/P WINSTON LORD AND PLANNING TALKS DELEGATION

E. O. 11652:G XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, JA

SUBJ: JAPAN AND ASEAN

REFS: (A) STATE 023428, (B) TOKYO 1008

1. DCM MET WITH DEPUTY VICE-MINISTER YOSHINO ON FEBRUARY 5 TO DISCUSS HIS RECENT VISITS TO JAKARTA AND MANILA (REF B). YOSHINO RETURNED TO TOKYO ON JANUARY 31.

2. YOSHINO REVIEWED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL HIS MEETING WITH GOI FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK. HE SAID THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED TO MALIK THAT JAPAN WISHED TO SUPPORT THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ASEAN AND IS WILLING TO EXTEND ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COOPERATION TO THE ORGANIZATION. IN PARTICULAR, JAPAN WOULD CONSIDER POSITIVELY ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH ANY "ASEAN PROJECTS: WHICH MIGHT EMERGE IN THE FUTURE. WITH REFERENCE TO A POSSIBLE POST-ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING TO INCLUDE THE PRIME MINISTERS OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND JAPAN, CONFIDENTIAL
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YOSHINO EXPLAINED THAT JAPAN DOES NOT FORESEE ACTUAL PARTICIPATION IN ASEAN DISCUSSIONS NOR DOES JAPAN HAVE IN

MIND MOVING TO ANY FORMAL ASSOCIATION WITH ASEAN; RATHER JAPAN'S NOTION IS ONLY TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AN INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH ASEAN LEADERS. YOSHINO SAID THAT MALIK SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY THE PERSPECTIVE WHICH JAPAN BRINGS TO THIS MATTER. MALIK TOLD YOSHINO THAT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO JAKARTA, AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK HAD EXPRESSED A POSITIVE INTEREST IN THE POSSIBILITY OF A POST-ASEAN MEETING. IN RESPONSE TO YOSHINO'S QUERIES, MALIK ALSO SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK MALAYSIA WOULD POSE SERIOUS OBJECTIONS AND THAT NEW ZEALAND WOULD WISH TO BE INCLUDED IF AUSTRALIA WERE WILLING TO ATTEND. MALIK NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IN APPROACHING THIS PROPOSITION HE HAD TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ASEAN'S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (WHICH, ACCORDING TO MALIK, HAS EXPRESSED A STRONG INTEREST IN SOME CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH ASEAN), SRI LANKA AND INDIA. MALIK ALSO REFERRED TO ASEAN'S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, ALTHOUGH HE POINTED OUT TO YOSHINO THAT HE HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH ANY OF THESE GOVERNMENTS. YOSHINO HAD THE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT MALIK CONSIDERED THE QUESTION OF ASEAN'S RELATIONS WITH SUCH OTHER COUNTRIES TO BE A MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION AT SOME LATER STAGE.

3. IT WAS YOSHINO'S CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT MALIK WAS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO INVITE THE PRIME MINISTER'S OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND JAPAN TO MEET WITH THE ASEAN LEADERS FOLLOWING THEIR SUMMIT MEETING. HE DISCUSSED SPECIFIC TIMING WITH YOSHINO AND SUGGESTED THAT SUCH A MEETING MIGHT BE HELD ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 25 FOLLOWING A FINAL ASEAN WRAPUP SESSION. IN DISCUSSING WHAT MIGHT BE SAID TO THE PRESS AFTER THEIR MEETING, YOSHINO SUGGESTED TO MALIK THAT FOR TACTICAL POLITICAL REASONS HE WOULD PREFER NOT TO PUT AN OPTIMISTIC CAST ON THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCH A MEETING. MALIK AGREED.

4. YOSHINO DESCRIBED HIS VISIT TO MANILA AS A FORMALITY SINCE HE IS CONFIDENT THAT MARCOS SUPPORTS THE IDEA OF A POST-ASEAN MEETING. HE NOTED THAT SINCE HE WAS UNABLE TO MEET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ROMULO, WHO HE UNDERSTOOD WAS ILL,
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HE HAD MET WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER INGLES. HE SAID THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED JAPAN'S VIEWS TO INGLES WHO SAID ONLY THAT HE WOULD REPORT THEM TO MARCOS AND ROMULO. FOR THE REASON INDICATED ABOVE, YOSHINO WAS NOT DISTURBED BY THIS NON-COMMITTAL RESPONSE. HE SAID THAT SUBSEQUENTLY AMBASSADOR SAWAKI HAD RECONFIRMED MARCOS' POSITIVE ATTITUDE.

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AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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EXDIS

5. YOSHINO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH ROMULO AND LEE KUAN YEW HAD EARLY ON EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR SUCH A MEETING AS IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION, HE FELT THAT THE ATTITUDE OF INDONESIA WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT SINCE WITHIN ASEAN BOTH THE PHILIPPINES AND SINGAPORE ARE REGARDED AS "MORE OUT-WARD LOOKING." HE EVIDENTLY EXPECTS MALIK TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE ON THIS MATTER AT THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING IN THAILAND ON FEBRUARY 10-11, ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVES MALIK WILL MAKE INFORMAL SOUNDINGS RATHER THAN PLACE THIS ON THE AGENDA OF THAT MEETING. YOSHINO OBVIOUSLY HOPES FOR A FAVORABLE DECISION BUT REMARKED THAT ALTHOUGH MALAYSIA HAS NOT OPENLY OPPOSED THE IDEA, IT HAS SHOWN NO ENTHUSIASM FOR IT. SHOULD MALAYSIA RESIST THE IDEA AT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, HE DOUBTS THAT THE OTHER ASEAN MEMBERS WOULD ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE MALAYSIA TO CHANGE ITS VIEW.

6. YOSHINO ASKED WHETHER THE EMBASSY HAD HAD ANY REACTION FROM THE DEPARTMENT AND THE DCM MADE POINTS INDICATED IN REF (A), PARA 1. YOSHINO SAID THAT HE APPRECIATE HAVING THESE VIEWS AND FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE U.S. POSITION. HE NOTED THAT IN HIS RECENT CONVERSATIONS IN JAKARTA AND THE PHILIPPINES, HE HAD MADE NO REFERENCE TO THE U.S. OR U.S.-ASEAN RELATIONS.

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7. YOSHINO NOTED THAT SOME OF JAPAN'S ASEAN AMBASSADORS HAVE NOT FAVORED THIS PROPOSAL AND HAVE ARGUED THAT SUCH A MOVE ON JAPAN'S PART IS PREMATURE. YOSHINO SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THIS VIEW BUT THAT HE PERSONALLY FEELS IT IS IMPORTANT FOR JAPAN TO "EXTEND ITS FRONTIERS" BY SEEKING MORE ACTIVELY TO PLAY A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE BELIEVES THAT SOME SUCH OBJECTIVE IS NECESSARY TO MOVE JAPAN FROM ITS LONG-STANDING PREOCCUPATION WITH ITS OWN AFFAIRS AND TOWARD A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. YOSHINO SAID THAT JAPAN IS NOT ATTEMPTING TO PRESSURE THE ASEAN COUNTRIES INTO A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN BUT HE SEES NO HARM IN JAPAN MAKING CLEAR TO THESE COUNTRIES THAT JAPAN IS PREPARED TO ENTER INTO SUCH A RELATIONSHIP IF THEY WISH IT. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE DECISION RESTS WITH THE ASEAN COUNTRIES AND PROBABLY WILL NOT BE OVERLY SURPRISED OR DISAPPOINTED IF ON THIS OCCASION THEY DO NOT RESPOND POSITIVELY TO JAPAN'S OVERTURES. IF THAT IS THE CASE, YOSHINO NOTED, NOTHING WILL HAVE BEEN LOST AND PERHAPS SOMETHING GAINED BY REGISTERING JAPAN'S INTEREST WHICH ASEAN COUNTRIES CAN THEN RESPOND TO AT A LATER TIME.

8. AS TO WHETHER PRIME MINISTER MIKI COULD ATTEND SUCH A MEETING IF THE INVITATION WERE EXTENDED, YOSHINO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS STILL PRESENTS A PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERS ARE ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE THE SCHEDULE OF LOWER HOUSE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SO THAT MIKI MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN DIET CONCURRENCE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. A SOLUTION EVIDENTLY HAS NOT YET BEEN FOUND, HOWEVER, AND YOSHINO SAID THAT IF AN INVITATION IS EXTENDED AFTER THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING IT MIGHT WELL TOUCH OFF A HASSLE IN THE DIET.

9. COMMENT: IT IS APPARENT TO US THAT YOSHINO HAS A STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT AND THAT HE HAS THE FULL BACKING AND PROBABLY THE PERSONAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRIME MINISTER MIKI. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS CIRCUMSTANCE PROMPTED YOSHINO TO READ MALIK'S REMARKS AS MORE POSITIVE THAN WAS IN FACT THE CASE OR WAS INTENDED. OUR LOWER LEVEL CONTACTS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MOREOVER INDICATE LITTLE ENTHUSIASM
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AND SOME CRITICISM OF THIS INITIATIVE AS ILL-TIMED AND POORLY EXECUTED. NOR ARE WE CERTAIN THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MIYAZAWA HAS BEEN BROUGHT COMPLETELY INTO THIS ACT. IF INDEED THIS IS AN EXERCISE IN MIKI'S PERSONAL DIPLOMACY, THIS MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE FACT THAT JAPANESE EMBASSIES IN SOME ASEAN COUNTRIES

SEEM TO HAVE GIVEN IT SOMETHING LESS THAN FULL SUPPORT.
HODGSON

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